113, 648, 721, 175, 563 Southeast Asia AL1

[For information on the history of the distribution of peoples and political entities in Southeast Asia, and for the history of relations amongst the states of Southeast Asia and the relations between the French in Indochina and the states of Southeast Asia, see 115: Le Boulanger, AM1 , Indochina, category, 116. --Analyst]

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727 AFTERMATH OF COMBAT--number and nature of casualties; treatment of own casualties (e.g., retrieving and disposal of dead, care of wounded); treatment of enemy casualties (e.g., despoiling, mutilation, killing); taking of trophies; treatment of captives and prisoners (e.g., slaughter, torture, mutilation, release, exchange, holding for ransom, adoption, enslavement, sacrifice); punishment of enemy leaders; military occupation and military government; homecoming after war (e.g., return trip, reception of returning warriors); home reactions to victory and defeat; victory celebrations (e.g., dances, feasts, memorials); demobilization; resumption of normal life; reconstruction of war damage; etc. See also:

Commemorative statues and monuments 211
Cannibalism 266
Mutilation 304
War dances 535
Slavery 587
Colonial administration 636
Prisons 697
Mortuary practices 784

1: Pelzer
166, 727

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/For author's recommendations regarding post-World War II rehabilitation and reconstruction in Southeast Asia and particularly regarding future agricultural colonization schemes, see category 116, pp. 232-242./

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generous comments and criticisms, and also for allowing me to use his unpublished extracts from the records of early British rule in Arakan.

The book was written during the late war, and completed early in 1945. The delay in publication has been due partly to the difficulties of the present time, partly to imperfections in the original script; and in this connection I must gratefully acknowledge the help and patience of the University Press. During the interval there have been great changes but, as the Japanese invasion of the Tropical Far East must certainly mark a turning-point in colonial rule, and subsequent events are still too close to be reviewed in due perspective, it seemed expedient merely to revise the tense in references to the war.

One change however calls for comment. Britain has granted Burma independence. On both parts this may seem bold even to the point of rashness. Some contend that we have been too ready to throw off the responsibilities of Government and Burmans over-ready to assume them. It is a tumbled house that they inherit, and there is urgent need to repair the damage, moral and material, inflicted on Burma in a war during which it was twice invaded. Exports have fallen by two-thirds of the pre-war figure of £37 million. The annual revenue covers only one-third of the current expenditure, and the national debt of over £110 million, about seven times the revenue, is rapidly increasing. Despite the general inexperience of Burmans in modern industry and commerce, their new leaders must enable Burma, so far as national interest allows, to make a due contribution to world welfare by the development of its resources. Moreover, in a country where the tradition of military service has long been suffered to decay, they must train the people to defend their freedom. Now also it will fall on them to deal with problems long-standing and hitherto insoluble: to adapt western institutions to an eastern people, provide remedies for agricultural debt and land alienation, reduce litigation and crime to healthy proportions, restore order among the Buddhist clergy, and purify the administration of corruption. In a troubled world, though less acquainted with affairs than their old rulers, they face a situation far more difficult. In these circumstances it is impossible to contemplate the future without misgivings, and we may well regret that in the past more was not done to equip the people and their leaders for the responsibilities of independence.

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Some advocate Dominion status as an alternative.[1] But, for countries such as Burma, Dominion status is an unmeaning formula. The British Dominions are countries potentially able to stand alone but preferring to be associated on equal terms with the other major partners in the Commonwealth. Burma is not in that position. The racial divisions and sharp conflict of interest and sentiment, which weakened the former Government, would still continue and are incompatible with Dominion status. On the other hand, if the Burman leaders had accepted it, they would have split their party, strengthened their rivals, especially the so-called Communists, and conferred on the prevalent dacoity the halo of patriotism and the semblance of civil war. It is lamentable that we failed to capture the imagination of the people so as to inspire an instinctive loyalty to the British connection, but we cannot escape the consequences of the past. In purporting to grant Dominion status, we would have been promising something that we could not give in return for support that the leaders of the people were unable to command. Once again we would have been committed to the ungrateful task of pacification; more difficult now, and far more costly, than after the wars of 1852 and 1885 when we could employ Indian troops.

I hold then that on both parts the decision in favour of independence was as wise as it was bold, not only in their interest but in ours. Nothing less than independence could transform nationalism from a destructive fever into a creative force. Yet national independence is not a cause or guarantee of welfare. Burmans still need help, and by our long connection we can do most to give the help they need. But we can help them only on terms acceptable to both parties. If we can help Burmans to stand alone securely, we may perhaps look forward to a time when they will welcome a more intimate association. However that may be, we can at least feel that we have done our best to meet whatever difficulties lie ahead by responding boldly to the challenge of a new age.

J. S. FURNIVALL

24 October 1947

[1] [ie. to unqualified independence —Analyst]

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3

LABOR IN SOUTHEAST ASIA DURING THE JAPANESE OCCUPATION

JAPAN'S TREATMENT of labor throughout Southeast Asia varied according to the military situation, the political relations of Japan with the individual country, and the availability of manpower. Everywhere, however, labor suffered from dislocations, regimentation, and general deterioration in working conditions except for the limited amount of technical training dispensed by the Japanese to create a needed nucleus of skilled workers. The information required to draw a complete picture of the labor situation during the war in each of the countries of this region is not yet available, but from such data as exist—drawn chiefly from former enemy sources—the outlines are reasonably clear.

By mid-1943 their military position in the Pacific War led the Japanese to alter their policy in Southeast Asia. Labor in the area had not previously been regimented on a nation-wide basis, although attempts to register the available manpower and use it for individual projects had been made as the need arose. But the critical shipping situation, which prevented both exports from Southeast Asia to Japan and imports needed in those countries, of necessity changed the objective of Japanese policy from one of economic exploitation for the benefit of the homeland to maintaining Japanese troops in the area and achieving local self-sufficiency and defense.

In June 1943 new labor measures were widely introduced; these foreshadowed large-scale forced labor and indicated that the Japanese realized that patriotic as well as economic and prestige incentives had to be offered to secure native cooperation. Soon after, the transplanting of laborers from the most populous areas to those requiring workers for defense projects and economic development was systematically undertaken. This policy prevailed until V-J Day at a tempo which kept pace with the worsening military situation of Japan.

Japan's political aims were reflected in marked differences in policy in each of the countries of eastern Asia, and also toward separate groups within each state. The comparatively good treatment meted out to the Siamese derived from Japan's need, for propaganda purposes, to maintain the fiction of Siam's voluntary alliance in the Greater East Asia war. Being unwilling, for political reasons, to coerce masses of Siamese workers, and for economic reasons to rely on their small, unskilled and re-

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127 167 464 luctant services, the Japanese imported prisoners of war and Javanese laborers for the construction of the Burma and Kra Isthmus railroads. Even after the pro-Japanese dictator, Pibul Songgram, had been ousted by a resistance government, the Japanese tolerated the change so long as they retained military and economic control over the country.

127 [464] 466 Malaya, on the other hand, received the least favored treatment. The only country in the area to which the Japanese did not promise "independence," it was earmarked as a Japanese colony. The Japanese were faced with a small, foreign labor supply whose special skills were adapted almost exclusively to the tin and rubber industries. Since they could utilize only a small proportion of the country's major produce, there occurred tremendous dislocation and unemployment of labor. The Chinese, as the largest, most skilled, and most hostile group, were subjected successively to brutal treatment, registration and regimentation, and transportation to farming colonies on the peninsula. The Indians were similarly organized along racial lines through the Japanese-sponsored Indian Independence Leagues and the Indian National Army. The Malays escaped the more rigorous forms of coercion because of their negligible importance as a source of labor.

[167] Despite the tight network of organization developed by the Japanese, Malaya's labor problem was never satisfactorily solved; guerilla ranks were strengthened by recalcitrants of all races and eventually the occupying forces had to import Japanese and Javanese workers in order to strengthen the defenses of that vitally strategic area.

127 466 Indochina, thanks to the survival of the French administration until the Japanese coup of March 1945, was treated only slightly less favorably than Siam. The Japanese found there a more abundant labor supply than in immediately neighboring countries but were hampered by the necessity of working indirectly through French officials, by the concentration of labor in the north, and its antipathy to furthering Japan's war [167] aims. As in Malaya, the inadequacy and indifference of the local labor supply compelled the Japanese to import a few thousand Chinese and Malay coolies as well as some Japanese technicians and supervisors. A [166] certain number of local laborers were conscripted to work on defense and industrial projects and an undetermined number of Tonkinese were transported to work on plantations in the south. Unemployment seems [464] not to have become a major factor, although as the war progressed there was a marked shift of agricultural workers to the cities, only partially offset by the evacuation of some laborers from heavily bombed urban areas. In common with the other laborers of Southeast Asia, Indochinese workers suffered from coercion and inflation but apparently not from nation-wide regimentation or transportation to work outside their own country.

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Indians

Next to the Javanese, the Burmese endured the greatest hardships during the Japanese occupation. Burma was more completely devastated by military campaigns than any other country in the area, and its proximity to India made it Japan's frontier zone. The need to win Burmese cooperation led Japan to grant Burma "independence" on August 1, 1943, and thereafter the local intelligentsia were placated by a Burmanization of the administrative services. But the country's laborers were in a far worse plight than they had been under the British administration. The Indians, whose number in Burma had been halved during the 1942 campaign, were immediately thereafter exposed to persecution by the Burmese. Virtual pogrom conditions in the delta compelled them to flee to Rangoon for Japanese protection and employment. Indian coolies supplied the casual labor needed in the nation's capital, and most of the white-collar class was absorbed into the Indian Independence Leagues and Indian National Army. Burmese laborers, who had long agitated for a restriction of Indian immigration, now found themselves bearing the brunt of Japanese requisitioning, which was represented by the puppet native government as a patriotic service. They had to perform heavy manual labor far from home, for low wages, and under alien and often harsh supervision. They suffered, in addition, from the knowledge that their own fields were neglected and their homes unprotected. Burma was frequently praised by the Japanese for having supplied more cooperative labor service than any other area in the southern regions, but nevertheless Javanese workers had to be brought in.

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Java, with the greatest labor reservoir of the area, was inevitably the country whose manpower was most intensively exploited by the Japanese. As elsewhere in Southeast Asia, the Javanese served as coolie labor for the construction of defense works and means of communication and also were trained by the Japanese for more technical work in shipyards and in factories. They were shipped by the thousands to areas outside their island as local needs and the exigencies of the military situation dictated.

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Originally the Japanese planned to perpetuate, on a far vaster scale, Dutch colonization schemes in Sumatra; in this they not only encountered the same obstacles as had their predecessors, but they found they could exploit all of the island's resources they could use with the manpower and machinery locally available. In mid-1943 they seem to have transferred the plan to Borneo, where additional labor was required to develop such local industries as timber. Many hundreds of male Javanese workers were shipped to Borneo, while smaller groups were sent to other areas.

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Unemployment during the Japanese occupation was serious only in Malaya. Elsewhere the defense and economic programs of the Japanese,

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727 464 together with the curtailment of alien Asiatic immigration, afforded plenty of jobs for those who were willing, or were forced, to work for wages paid in inflated currency.

727 433 464 In the food-surplus countries—Burma, Siam, and Indochina—which were also those receiving the most favored political treatment at the hands of the Japanese, the areas under rice and allied crops declined. The decrease in the number of draft animals through disease and Japanese requisitioning; the lack of implements; and, above all, the loss of former export markets caused the local farmers to cultivate very little more than their families required, and there was a marked exodus from the agricultural communities to the cities or places of more remunerative employment. In the countries of food deficiency—Malaya and the Outer Islands of the East Indies—the Japanese made great efforts and probably succeeded in increasing the area under food-crop cultivation, but never to the point of self-sufficiency. The Japanese also arbitrarily prohibited certain industries as "nonessential" and shifted the workers to others accordingly.

727 465 Very little information is available as to the wages paid during the Japanese occupation. Where local labor was limited and native goodwill was sought, as in Siam, the Japanese seem to have paid high wages from the outset. In densely populated areas like Java, wages were reportedly decreased immediately after the occupation. In time, and with the ever greater need for additional labor services, the Japanese permitted successive wage rises. But nowhere did wage increases keep pace with the more rapidly rising cost of living and they had to be supplemented by allowances, medals, and words of praise. The groups that suffered most from this disparity were the Asiatic government-servant and white-collar class, whose numbers had always exceeded the demand and whose services were far less necessary to the Japanese than was manual labor.

727 466 468 Labor legislation was passed only in negative measures of regimentation and outlawing of strikes. Nevertheless, reports of strikes periodically filtered through the barrage of Japanese propaganda, particularly a few that took place in Indochina and Burma. Most of them registered grievances against low pay, high living costs, and heavy taxation, but some were doubtless of a political character—difficult to distinguish from sabotage. Following one strike in 1943, the Cochin-China police arrested a number of "communists." In Malaya and Indonesia, control by the Japanese military and naval forces was not exercised through any native administration, and the strictness of their rule seems to have precluded any possible recourse to the strike weapon.

727 466 In Burma, Malaya, and Indonesia the Japanese set up a bewildering array of organizations into which the local peoples were regimented by communal, occupational, religious, sex, and age groups. Not only did

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many of these organizations overlap but they were assigned multiple and often identical tasks and all were subjected to Japanese "spiritual" indoctrination. Most of their members had to undergo military training and perform labor services, ranging from accompanying the Japanese army to look after supplies to washing clothes for Nipponese officers. Most of the forced labor, however, was required for the construction of defense works and communications. Some of those performing such services—lured into "volunteering" by the promise of uniforms, additional food, and the same treatment as was accorded to Japanese soldiers—were organized into picturesquely named *Heihos* and Sweat Army battalions. While these militarized groups probably suffered more than any others, the bulk of Southeast Asia's population, wherever they were, performed hard labor for the Japanese during a large part of the occupation period.

Had Japan's gamble in far-flung imperialism not been undertaken at so rapid a tempo, and against such overwhelming forces, the occupying authorities might have evolved some means of winning over the peoples of Southeast Asia before resorting to the harsh and unlimited exploitation they did. For where the Japanese seemed sincere in their encouragement of nationalist aspirations, as for a time they appeared to be in Burma, the people were far more cooperative than they were in such areas as Malaya, which from the outset were scheduled to become colonies of Japan.

The chief victims of the Japanese were undoubtedly those who were transplanted to work in foreign lands, most of whom will never return to relate their sufferings or to keep alive hatred of the Japanese. However, the people as a whole suffered in common from the same hardships and the same demands on their services and it cannot be concluded that laborers as a class developed any special consciousness as a result of their war experience. Their hours of work were probably longer, their pay less adequate to their needs and their masters more demanding than the Occidentals whom the invasion had displaced, but their grievances and aspirations had probably come to be identified with those of their compatriots and their status as laborers was neither more nor less advanced than before the war.

4

POSTWAR LABOR DEVELOPMENTS

SINCE THE JAPANESE SURRENDER, labor movements throughout Southeast Asia have made significant advances in organization, solidarity, and political self-consciousness. Their progress varies from country to coun-

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SUPPLEMENT

NOTES ON LABOR DEVELOPMENTS IN 1946–47

121 A JOURNEY UNDERTAKEN by the author between December 1946 and June 1947 to some of the principal cities of Southeast Asia had for one of its objects the collection of information on the latest developments in the region's labor conditions and labor movements. Although it proved not yet possible to secure detailed statistical data on employment, wages, and other indices for the postwar period, this investigation helped to confirm the existence of certain trends previously observed and to open up, in a few instances, new vistas of a vigorous pursuit of progress, either on the part of a government or on that of organized labor.

467 727 On the whole, the period was found to be one of great uneasiness. There was throughout the region a sense of insecurity because of the distorted structure of its major export industries. There was a sense of insecurity also in circles which, unable to accept the radical change in political and economic power that had come over large parts of the world, feared any movement which might tend to increase the political orientation of organized labor. On the other hand, there was also the natural hesitation of those seriously devoted to the promotion of progressive and liberalizing labor legislation to promote or enact measures which, with the present disturbance of social relations, it might prove difficult to enforce. Organized labor itself reflected the cleavage, to be found at this time also in industrially more advanced parts of the world, between a leadership satisfied to do the best it could within the technical limits of traditional trade union practices and one primarily thinking in political terms and desiring the most rapid possible assimilation of the local labor forces to the revolutionary international labor movement.

121 Only a few illustrations can here be given of these various tendencies as the author observed them or heard of them from authoritative spokesmen for government, labor, and professional management. These notes are offered as carrying a little further into the uncertain future the picture presented in the major part of this book. They sketch a passing phase in one of the most dramatic developments of our time: the effort of an important section of the world's workers to raise their status from an age-old level of 250 oppression and neglect to one of worthwhile human existence.